

ISLAM

Islam respects women a lot

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

Islam grants even more respect to women than to men. According to a tradition, a man once came to the Prophet and asked him who rightfully deserved the best treatment from him. "Your mother," said the Prophet. "Who's next?" asked the man. "Your mother." "Who comes next?" the man asked again. The Prophet again replied, "Your mother." "Who is after that?" insisted the man. "Your father," said the Prophet.

Here are some further quotations from the Quran and hadith regarding the position of women in Islam:

"Women shall with justice have rights similar to those exercised against them." (2:228)

"Women shall have a share in what their parents and kinsmen leave; whether it be little or much, it is legally theirs." (4:7)

"Those that have faith and do good works, both men and women, shall enter the Gardens of Paradise and receive blessings without measure." (40:20)

Another example concerns Hajra, the Prophet Abraham's wife. Hajj, regarded as the greatest form of worship in Islam, entails the performance of saee, one of the main rites of the Hajj. This is accomplished by running back and forth seven times between Safa and Marwah, two hillocks near the Kabah.

This running, enjoined upon every pilgrim, be they rich or poor, literate or illiterate, kings or commoners, is in imitation of the desperate quest of Hajra, Abraham's wife, for water to quench the thirst of her crying infant, four thousand years ago. The performance of this rite is a lesson in struggling for the cause of God. It is of the utmost significance that this was an act performed by a woman. Perhaps there could be no better demonstration of a woman's greatness than God's command to all men, literally to follow in her footsteps.